

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP-09B9)
SHIP'S HISTORY SECTION

HISTORY OF USS MIDWAY (CVA-41)

USS MIDWAY (CVA-41), an attack aircraft carrier, is named to commemorate the Battle of Midway, 3-6 June 1942, one of the decisive battles of history that had far reaching and enduring results on the Pacific war,

Midway, an atoll of two islands at the northwest tip of the Hawaiian Islands Chain, was saved to become an important submarine base for operations into the western Pacific. Likewise saved was Hawaii, the great bastion from which attacks were carried into the South Pacific and Japan itself. Of greatest importance was the crippling of Japan's carrier striking force, a severe blow from which she never recovered. With four large aircraft carriers and a cruiser at the bottom of the sea went some 250 planes along with a high percentage of her most highly trained and battle experienced carrier pilots. The great victory in the Battle of Midway spelled the doom of Japan.

USS MIDWAY, originally designated a large aircraft carrier (CVE-41), was built by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company of Newport News, Virginia. Her keel was laid 27 October 1943 and she was launched 20 March 1945, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Bradford William Ripley, widow of naval aviator Lieutenant Ripley, II, USNR, and daughter of ex-Governor James M. Cox of Ohio. The ship was placed in commission at the Norfolk Navy Yard on 10 September 1945, Captain Joseph F. Bolger, USN, in command. Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Artemus L. Gates was the principal speaker for the commissioning ceremony and hailed the carrier as representing "a great milestone in our naval history". Also on hand as a speaker was Lieutenant George Gay, USNR, sole survivor of the carrier HORNET's famed Torpedo Squadron Eight which pressed home attacks on enemy carriers off Midway, 4 June 1942, despite overwhelming opposition by enemy fighter planes.

MIDWAY remained in the Norfolk Navy Yard for fitting out until 12 October 1945 when she commenced operations from Norfolk. At 1324, 22 October 1945, she landed her first aircraft aboard, a Chance-Vought Corsair (F4U-4) fighter, and at 1630 she catapulted the first plane from her deck. After visiting New York, 24-30 October, to celebrate Navy Day, she departed Norfolk on 7 November 1945 for shakedown training while based at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. She returned to Norfolk on 13 December 1945 for alterations, followed by exercises in the area of the Virginia Capes and the Chesapeake Bay. On 20 February 1946, Rear Admiral J.H. Cassady, USN, hoisted his flag in MIDWAY and she became the flagship of Carrier Division ONE, U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

On 1 March 1946, MIDWAY got underway from Norfolk as flagship for "Operation Frostbite", a cold weather cruise for testing equipment in the frigid region of the North Atlantic extending over an ocean area some 500 miles in diameter between Greenland, Labrador and the Hudson Strait. Flanked by three destroyers and a fleet oiler, she conducted tests which revealed the actual

functioning of various types of aircraft in extreme weather conditions. One of the Navy's new jet-propelled Fireball fighters (FR-1), was also taken along for the experiment. Such innovations to carrier warfare as a helicopter for effecting air-sea rescues, snowplows to operate on the giant flight decks, and baskets attached to cranes projecting from destroyers, devised to snatch pilots from the icy waters, were tested. Each aviator was equipped with new exposure suits recently developed in an effort to protect the fliers forced down in the frigid sea. She returned to New York on 28 March 1946 and departed 5 April 1946 to resume operations from Norfolk, Virginia. On 19 April 1946 MIDWAY departed Norfolk to take part in EIGHTH Fleet exercises in the Caribbean Sea. While enroute, 22 April, she rendered a 21-gun salute to President Harry S. Truman who joined the task group in carrier FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, flagship of the EIGHTH Fleet. After visiting Port of Spain, Trinidad, where the President left the task group, MIDWAY took part in EIGHTH Fleet exercises off Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Culebra Island, Puerto Rico. She returned to New York on 27 May 1946 and cleared New York Harbor on 10 June, entering the Norfolk Navy Yard the next day for extensive alterations until 4 April 1947 when she shifted to Pier 5, at Norfolk, Virginia. After operations in the Virginia Capes area and two training cruises to Guantanamo Bay, she entered drydock in the Norfolk Navy Yard to prepare for "Operation Sandy" which was to mark the first shipboard launching of a heavy rocket missile. She sailed from Norfolk on 2 September 1947, carrying a V-2 rocket, several tons of equipment, and a host of military and scientific observers. As the flagship of Rear Admiral J.J. Ballantine, Commander Carrier Division ONE, she arrived off the Narrows of Bermuda Island on 4 September to receive observers which included the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Admiral W.H.P. Blandy; Doctor F. Hovde, President of Duke University; leading military personnel in the field of guided missiles; and representatives of the General Electric and Bell Research Laboratories. At 1420, she got underway, screened by the destroyers LARSON (DD-830), HANSON (DD-832) and THOMAS (DD-833). At 1554, 6 September 1947, a captured German V-2 rocket was fired from the flight deck of the MIDWAY, marking the first time such a large bombardment rocket had been launched from ships or from a moving platform. She debarked her passengers the next day at Bermuda and returned to Norfolk on 9 September 1947.

On 29 October 1947 MIDWAY departed Norfolk to participate in Second Task Fleet maneuvers while enroute to Argentina, Newfoundland, then steamed from that port for her first tour of duty in the Mediterranean, arriving at Gibraltar, 17 November 1947. Still the flagship of Carrier Division ONE, her operations in the Mediterranean included visits to Bone, Algeria; Valetta, Malta; Genoa, Naples and Taranto, Italy; Augusta, Sicily; and D'Hyerres, France. She departed Gibraltar on 2 March 1948 and returned to Norfolk on 11 March 1948. Overhaul in the Norfolk Navy Yard, 22 March-30 September, was followed by refresher training cruise to Guantanamo Bay and exercises off the Virginia Capes. She again sailed for the Mediterranean on 4 January 1949, arriving at Gibraltar on 13 January to commence her second tour and departing on 21 February for return to Norfolk, 5 March 1949. Operations until 31 October 1949 included a cruise to the Panama Canal; carrier qualification landings for Air Group Eight off Jacksonville, Florida, and fleet maneuvers while based at Guantanamo Bay and off New York.

MIDWAY (CVA-41)

The flagship of Rear Admiral J.J. Clark, Commander Carrier Division FOUR, MIDWAY sailed from Norfolk 31 October 1949, enroute for Davis Straits as a unit of Task Force TWENTY-EIGHT. At 1318, 12 November, she crossed the Arctic Circle, latitude 66°-33' North, longitude 56°-20' West. Upon completion of maneuvers in the North Atlantic she returned to Norfolk on 22 November 1949.

MIDWAY departed Norfolk 6 January 1950 for her third tour of duty in the Mediterranean, arriving at Gibraltar on 16 January for operations which included visits to Cypress, Istanbul, Malta, Cannes, Genoa, and Lisbon. She sailed from Lisbon 15 May and returned to Norfolk on 25 May 1950. Rear Admiral Clark, Commander Carrier Division FOUR, shifted his flag ashore on 15 June and MIDWAY became the flagship of Rear Admiral W.L. Rees, USN, Commander Carrier Division TWO, engaging in two four-day cruises (19-27 June) for demonstration and evaluation of aircraft. Observers aboard included Vice Admiral F.B. Stump, USN, Commander Air, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Honorable John F. Floberg, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air; and Admiral W.M. Fechteler, USN, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Upon return from her second demonstration cruise 27 June, Rear Admiral Rees shifted his flag to CORAL SEA and MIDWAY continued operations off the Virginia Capes, engaged in carrier qualification landings. On 10 July she sailed for her fourth tour with the SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean, arriving at Gibraltar on 20 July. She steamed to Phaleron Bay, Greece, where she had brief service as flagship of Rear Admiral T.M. Stokes, USN, Commander Cruiser Division FOUR, then became flagship of Rear Admiral W.G. Switzer, USN, Commander Carrier Division SIX. She departed Gibraltar on 1 November and returned to Norfolk on 10 November 1950.

MIDWAY entered the Norfolk Navy Yard on 22 November 1950 for installation of new rapid-fire gun batteries and a heavier flight deck capable of handling new jet planes. This work was completed by 24 April 1951 and followed by exercises out of Norfolk including carrier qualification landings and gunnery exercises off the coast of North Carolina. On 22 May 1951, MIDWAY steamed for Guantanamo Bay where she engaged in day and night carrier qualification landings; gunnery exercises, and simulated aerial bombardment missions. She returned to Norfolk on 10 July 1951 for operations off the Virginia Capes and the coast of South Carolina, departing Norfolk on 22 October for participation in Atlantic Fleet exercises along the eastern seaboard to the area off Viques Island, Puerto Rico, and returning on 15 November 1951 to resume operations in the area of the Virginia Capes.

On 9 January 1952 MIDWAY sailed from Norfolk for her fifth cruise in the Mediterranean, arriving at Gibraltar on 21 January as the flagship of Rear Admiral Austin K. Doyle, USN, Commander Carrier Division FOUR. On 26 February she got underway from Genoa, Italy, for the Central Mediterranean to participate in "Operation Grand Slam" with other units of the SIXTH Fleet and ships of the Italian, English, and French Navy. The combined maneuvers were completed by 5 March and she returned to Genoa the next day, later sailing for SIXTH Fleet exercises off Suda Bay, Crete, and Phaleron Bay, Greece. She departed Gibraltar on 28 April and returned to Norfolk on 5 May 1952. After a brief upkeep period in the Norfolk Navy Yard she conducted local test exercises for the Bureau of Aeronautics and made two cruises to Halifax, Nova Scotia, returning to Norfolk from her last cruise, 1 August 1952.

MIDWAY (CVA-41)

On 26 August 1952 MIDWAY departed Norfolk for combined maneuvers in the North Sea area with units of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. She arrived at Firth of Clyde, Greenock, Scotland, 10 September 1952 and put to sea two days later for "Operation Mainbrace" in the northeastern Atlantic, steaming in formation with the carriers FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, WASP, and battleship WISCONSIN. The combined maneuvers were completed 24 September and Rear Admiral Stuart H. Ingersoll, USN, boarded MIDWAY at sea to relieve Rear Admiral Austin Kelvin Doyle as Commander Carrier Division FOUR. MIDWAY arrived at Cherbourg, France, on 26 September and was visited by the Mayor of that city. She cleared Cherbourg Harbor on 29 September and touched at Plymouth, England, the same day before departure for Norfolk where she arrived 8 October 1952. She was designated an attack aircraft carrier (CVA-41), effective 1 October 1952. → After exercises off Newport, Rhode Island, she entered the Navy Yard on 24 October for minor repairs until 14 November, when she resumed local operations out of Norfolk.

On 1 December 1952, MIDWAY departed Norfolk for her sixth Mediterranean cruise, arriving at Gibraltar on 10 December 1952. The flagship of Rear Admiral Ingersoll, Commander Carrier Division FOUR, she took part in "Operation Rendezvous", a joint defense exercise of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Forces. Principal ports of call during this tour of the Mediterranean were Marseille, France; Barcelona, Spain; Augusta Bay, Sicily; and Rhodes, Greece. She departed Oran, Algeria, on 8 May 1953 and returned to Norfolk on 19 May 1953. Overhaul in the Norfolk Navy Yard, 29 May to 26 October 1953, was followed by air operations off Mayport and Jacksonville, Florida, thence to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for refresher training before return to Norfolk on 19 December 1953.

On 4 January 1954, MIDWAY departed Norfolk as flagship of Carrier Division FOUR for her seventh tour with the SIXTH Fleet, arriving at Gibraltar on 14 January 1954. She continued duty in the Mediterranean until 26 July 1954 when she cleared Gibraltar for return to Norfolk on 4 August 1954, thereafter engaging in exercises in the Virginia Capes area and conducting two cruises for air operations off Mayport, Florida.

On 27 December 1954, MIDWAY departed Norfolk for a world cruise, touching at Mayport, Florida (28-29 December) then steaming independently by the way of Capetown, South Africa (15-17 January 1955) and Colombo, Ceylon (27-29 January), to join units of the SEVENTH Fleet off Formosa, 6 February 1955. She became the flagship of Carrier Division THREE the next day when Rear Admiral R.W. Ruble, USN, came aboard by highline from destroyer STODDARD (DD-566). She continued duty with units of Task Force SEVENTY-SEVEN until late June 1955, engaged in patrol off Formosa with fleet exercises and maneuvers in the South China Sea to areas off Subic Bay in the Philippine Islands, Okinawa, and the coast of Honshu, Japan. On 28 June 1955, MIDWAY departed Yokosuka for return to the United States, sailing by way of Pearl Harbor to arrive at the Naval Air Station, Alameda, California, 14 July 1955. After off-loading aircraft and debarking personnel and equipment of Air Group ONE, she departed 22 July to off load ammunition at Bangor, Washington, then shifted to Tacoma, Washington, 26 July. She moored at the U.S. Naval Station, Seattle, on 29 July and entered the Puget Sound Navy Yard on 8 August 1955.

MIDWAY was placed out of commission in the Puget Sound Navy Yard on 15 October 1955 for conversion which included installation of an angle flight deck. She was recommissioned 30 September 1957, Captain Francis E. Nuessle in command, and departed Seattle on 10 December for shocker training operations off the coast of California, conducted from the ports of San Francisco and San Diego. She returned to the Puget Sound Navy Yard on 29 March for alterations until 19 May, then resumed exercises along the coast from Alameda, followed by a period of upkeep in the San Francisco Naval Shipyard. On 16 July 1958 she put to sea from San Francisco to conduct sea trials and departed Alameda on 16 August 1958 to join units of the SEVENTH Fleet off Okinawa, 6 September 1958. The flagship of Carrier Division FIVE, she patrolled off Formosa with units of Task Force SEVENTY-SEVEN, engaged in fleet tactics and maneuvers off the Philippines, Okinawa, and the coast of Honshu. She cleared Yokosuka Bay on 24 February 1959 and steamed by the way of Pearl Harbor for return to Alameda, California, 12 March 1959.

LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

Captain Joseph F. Bolger, USN	10 Sep 1945-12 Jan 1946
Captain Herbert S. Duckworth, USN	12 Jan 1946-18 Jul 1946
Captain John P. Whitney, USN	18 Jul 1946-11 Aug 1947
Captain Albert K. Morehouse, USN	11 Aug 1947-22 Apr 1948
Commander Forsythe Massey, USNR	22 Apr 1948-28 May 1948
Commander R.N. Sharp, USN	28 May 1948- 7 Sep 1948
Captain Marcel E.A. Gouin, USN	7 Sep 1948- 8 Aug 1949
Captain Wallace M. Beakley, USN	8 Aug 1949- 1 Jul 1950
Captain Fredrick N. Kivette, USN	1 Jul 1950- 8 Mar 1951
Captain Kenneth Craig, USN	8 Mar 1951- 2 Apr 1952
Captain Frank O'Beirne, USN	2 Apr 1952- 4 Apr 1953
Captain Clifford S. Cooper, USN	4 Apr 1953-19 Jan 1954
Captain William H. Ashford, Jr., USN	19 Jan 1954- 1 Oct 1954
Captain Reynold D. Hogle, USN	1 Oct 1954- 7 Sep 1955
Commander Richard S. Rogers, USN	7 Sep 1955-14 Oct 1955
Captain Francis E. Nuessle, USN	30 Sep 1957- 2 Jun 1958
Captain John T. Blackburn, USN	2 Jun 1958-

ORIGINAL STATISTICS (1945)

LENGTH OVERALL:	968'
EXTREME BREADTH (at or about flight deck)	136'
STANDARD DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	45,000
Maximum Navigational draft:	35'
DESIGNED SPEED:	
Knots:	33
TOTAL ACCOMMODATIONS:	
Officer:	379
Enlisted:	3,725
ARMAMENT:	
Primary:	(18) 5"/54
Secondary:	(21) quad. 40-mm

Stenciled/compiled 6/2/59 (Wn)

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NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION (OP-09B9)
SHIPS' HISTORIES SECTION

HISTORY OF SHIPS NAMED MIDWAY

USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) is the fourth ship of the fleet to bear the name.

The Midway islands are an atoll of two islands: Sand island and Eastern island. Halfway across the Pacific they are located about 1300 miles northwest of Honolulu, Hawaii. It is located at Latitude 28°15'N, Longitude 177°20'W. An American discovery in 1859, it was annexed in 1867 and became a trans-Pacific airline base in 1935. The U.S. Naval Station was commissioned there 18 August 1941.

Between 3 and 6 June 1942, the U.S. Pacific Fleet turned back a Japanese attempt to capture MIDWAY, the westernmost island in atoll in the Hawaiian chain, in a decisive action which cost the enemy four large aircraft carriers and forced Japan to assume a defensive posture. In Admiral Samuel E. Morison's words, "MIDWAY was a victory not only of courage, determination and excellent bombing technique, but of intelligence, bravely and wisely applied." The American Navy's triumph in the Battle of Midway foreshadowed Japan's final surrender. The first MIDWAY was named for the atoll, the second and third for the battle.

The first MIDWAY (AG-41) was built in 1921 as ORITANI by Todd Shipyards Corporation, Brooklyn, New York, and renamed TYEE in 1939; was acquired by the Navy on a bare boat charter through War Shipping Administration from Alaska Transportation Company, Seattle, Washington; and commissioned at Puget Sound Navy Yard 10 April 1942.

She had an overall length of 238 feet eight inches, a beam of 33 feet 8 inches, a full load displacement of 2,250 tons and a draft of 16 feet 9 inches. MIDWAY had a speed of 11.5 knots, a complement of 86 officers and men and was armed one 3 inch gun.

Classified as general auxiliary, MIDWAY operated along the Pacific coast between ports of the Northwestern United States and American bases in Alaska and the Aleutians. In January 1943 she steamed to Pearl Harbor and shuttled troops, provisions and equipment between the islands of the Central Pacific. Renamed PANAY 3 April 1943, she resumed the Alaskan run in the summer and continued this vital service to military and naval units in the far north through the end of the war.

PANAY was decommissioned 24 May 1946 and was returned to her owner.

The second MIDWAY (CVE-63) was laid down as CHAPIN BAY 23 January 1943; renamed MIDWAY 3 April 1943; launched 17 August 1943; sponsored by Mrs. Howard Nixon Culter; and commissioned 23 October 1943, Captain F. J. McKenna in command.

The escort carrier MIDWAY had an overall length of 512 feet 3 inches, a beam of 65 feet, at the waterline, an extreme width of 108 feet 1 inch at the flight deck, a draft of 22 feet 6 inches and a displacement of 7,800 tons. Her designed complement was 860 officers and men. She was originally armed with one 5 inch gun and sixteen 40mm guns. Her designed speed was 19 knots.

After shakedown on the West Coast and two voyages to Pearl Harbor and one to Australia carrying replacement aircraft, MIDWAY joined Rear Admiral Bogan's Carrier Support Group 1 in June for the conquest of the Marianas. She furnished air coverage for transport groups and participated in strikes on SAIPAN 15 June. She fought off several air attacks, but suffered no damage during her support of the Saipan campaign.

On 13 July she sailed for Eniwetok for replenishment, before joining the attack on Tinian 23 July. Furnishing air support for ground forces on the island and maintaining an anti-submarine patrol, MIDWAY operated off Tinian until she again headed out for supplies 28 July.

MIDWAY remained at anchor in Eniwetok Atoll until she got underway 8 August, for Manus Island, arriving 13 August. Exactly a month later, she sortied with Task Force 77 for the invasion of Morotai. Catapulting her first plane to support the landings 15 September, she continued to assist American troops ashore and to provide cover for the transports through the 23rd.

After a refueling period, MIDWAY resumed air operations in the Palaus until returning to Seeadler Harbor 3 October. There, word arrived that the escort carrier had been renamed ST. LO, 10 October to free the name MIDWAY for a new giant attack carrier and to commemorate an important victory of American troops in France who had captured the strongly defended town, St. Lo, 18 July 1944.

ST. LO departed Seeadler Harbor 12 October to participate in the liberation of Leyte. Ordered to provide air coverage

and close air support during the bombardment and amphibious landings on Leyte Island, she arrived off Leyte 17 October. After furnishing air support during landings by Ranger units on Dinagat and Homonhon Islands in the eastern approaches to Leyte Gulf, she launched air strikes in support of invasion operations at Tacloban on the northeast coast of Leyte. Operating with Rear Admiral C.A.F. Sprague's escort carrier group, "Taffy 3" (TU-77.4.3), which consisted of 6 escort carriers and a screen of 3 destroyers and 4 destroyer escorts, ST. LO sailed off the east of Leyte and Samar as her planes sortied from 18 to 24 October, struck and destroyed enemy installations and airfields on Leyte, Samar, Cebu, Negros, and Pansy Islands.

Steaming about 60 miles east of Samar before dawn 25 October, "Taffy 3" launched the day's initial air strikes. At 0647 Rear Admiral Sprague received word that a large Japanese fleet was approaching from the northeast. Comprised of 4 battleships, 8 cruisers, and 12 destroyers, Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita's Center Force steadily closed and at 0638 opened fire on "Taffy 3".

So began the Battle off Samar -- one of the most memorable engagements in U.S. naval history. Outnumbered and outgunned, the relatively slow ships of "Taffy 3" seemed fated for disaster, but they defied the odds and gamely accepted the enemy's challenge.

ST. LO accelerated to flank speed: and, despite fire from enemy cruisers, she launched her planes ordering the pilots "to attack the Japanese task force and proceed to Tacloban airstrip, Leyte, to rearm and refuel." As salvos fell "with disconcerting rapidity" increasingly nearer ST. LO, her planes, striking the enemy force with bombs, rockets and gunfire, inflicted heavy damage on the closing ships.

By 0800, the enemy cruisers, which were steaming off her port quarter, closed to within 18,000 yards. ST. LO gamely responded to their salvos with rapid fire from her single 5-inch gun, which only intensified the enemy fire.

At 0830 five enemy destroyers steamed over the horizon off her starboard quarter. The closing ships opened fire from about 14,500 yards; and, as screening ships engaged the cruisers and laid down concealing smoke, ST. LO shifted her fire and for the next hour traded shots with the guns of Japan's Destroyer Squadron 10. Many salvos exploded close aboard or passed directly overhead.

Under heavy attack from the air and harassed by incessant fire from American destroyers and destroyer escorts, the enemy cruisers broke off action and turned northward at 0920. At 0915 the enemy destroyers, which were kept at bay by the daring and almost singlehanded exploits fired torpedoes. As the torpedoes approached the escort carriers, they slowed down. An Avenger torpedo-bomber from ST. LO strafed and exploded two approaching torpedoes and a shell from her 5 inch gun deflected a third from a collision course with her stern.

At about 0930, as the enemy ships fired parting salvos and reversed course northward, ST. LO scored a direct hit amidships on a retreating destroyer. Five minutes later she ceased fire and retired southward with the surviving ships of "Taffy 3".

At 1050 the task unit came under a concentrated air attack; and during the 40-minute battle with enemy suicide planes, all escort carriers but FANSHAW BAY (CVE-70) were damaged. One plane crashed through ST. LO's flight deck, at 1051, and exploded her torpedo and bomb magazine, mortally wounding the gallant carrier. ST. LO was engulfed in flame and sank half an hour later, leaving a cloud of dense black smoke to mark her watery grave.

ST. LO received the Presidential Unit citation:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against powerful units of the Japanese Fleet during the Battle off Samar, Philippines, October 25, 1944. Silhouetted against the dawn as the Central Japanese Force steamed through San Bernardino Strait toward Leyte Gulf, Task Unit 77.4.3 was suddenly taken under attack by hostile cruisers on its port hand, destroyers on the starboard and battleships from the rear. Quickly laying down a heavy smoke screen the gallant ships of the Task Unit waged battle fiercely against the superior speed and fire power of the advancing enemy, swiftly launching and rearming aircraft and violently zigzagging in protection of vessels stricken by hostile armor-piercing shells, anti-personnel projectiles and suicide bombers. With one carrier of the group sunk, others badly damaged and squadron aircraft courageously coordinating in the attacks by making dry runs over the enemy Fleet as the Japanese relentlessly closed in for the kill, two of the Unit's valiant destroyers and one destroyer escort charged the battleships point-blank and, expending their last torpedoes in desperate defense of the entire group, went down under the enemy's heavy shells as a climax to two and one half hours of sustained and furious combat. The courageous determination and the superb teamwork of the officers and men who fought the embarked planes and who manned the ships of

Task Unit 77.4.3 were instrumental in effecting the retirement of a hostile force threatening our Leyte invasion operations and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service." Other ships in Task Unit 77.4.3 included FANSHAW BAY (CVE-70), GAMBLER BAY (CVE-73), KALININ BAY (CVE-68), KITKUN BAY (CVE-71) and WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66).

ST. LO earned the following Battle Stars:

1 Star/MARIANAS OPERATION:

Capture and Occupation of Saipan: 15 June - 20 July 1944
Capture and Occupation of Guam : 21 - 23 July 1944

1 Star/Tinian capture and Occupation: 24 - 29 July 1944

1 Star/WESTERN NEW GUINEA OPERATIONS:

Morotai Landings: 15 September 1944

1 Star/LEYTE OPERATION:

Battle off Samar, Leyte Landings Philippines: 24-25 September
1944

Commanding Officer (CVE-63)

Captain Francis J. McKenna, USN 23 October 1943 - 25 October 1944

The third MIDWAY (CVA-41), a heavy attack aircraft carrier, was laid down 27 October 1943; launched 20 March 1945 by Newport News Shipbuilding Company, Newport News, Virginia; sponsored by Mrs. Bradford William Ripley, Jr.; commissioned 10 September 1945; Captain Joseph F. Bolger commanding.

At commissioning, MIDWAY had a length of 968 feet, a beam of 136 feet, a maximum draft of 35 feet, a full load displacement of 60,100 tons, and had accommodations for 379 officers and 3,725 men. She was armed with eighteen 5"/54 caliber guns, twenty-one quadruple, 40MM mounts and had two hydraulic catapults forward.

After visiting New York 24-30 October 1945 to celebrate Navy Day, MIDWAY departed Norfolk 7 November for shakedown cruise in the Caribbean. She returned to Norfolk 13 December for alterations and training exercises off the Eastern seaboard. 20 February 1946, she became flagship of Commander Carrier Division 1.

1 March 1946, CVB-41 left Norfolk as flagship for "Operation Frostbite", a cold weather cruise for testing equipment in the North Atlantic, between Greenland, Labrador, and Hudson Strait. The tests revealed the performance of various type

aircraft in extreme weather conditions. Such innovations to carrier warfare as helicopter rescue of downed pilots, snow plows to clear flight decks, exposure suits for pilots, and destroyers using baskets attached to cranes to rescue ditched aircrewmembers. The ship returned to New York 28 March, and departed Norfolk 19 April for exercises in the Caribbean. Enroute 22 April she fired a twenty-one gun salute to President Truman, who had joined the task group aboard FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

Returning to New York 27 May, MIDWAY entered Norfolk Navy Yard 11 June for extensive alterations. Out of the yard 4 April 1947, she was involved in exercises off the Virginia Capes and Guantanamo Bay until she again entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard Dry Dock to prepare for "Operation Sandy". She sailed from Norfolk 2 September, carrying a German V-2 rocket, several tons of equipment and numerous military and scientific observers in the field of guided missiles. 6 September, she fired the captured V-2 from the flight deck, the first time such a ballistic missile had been launched from a ship or a moving platform. She debarked her passengers the next day at Bermuda and returned to Norfolk 9 September.

MIDWAY departed Norfolk 29 October for her first tour of duty in the Mediterranean, arriving Gibraltar 17 November via Newfoundland. Her presence in the Mediterranean with the 6th Fleet served as tangible proof of America's will to deter the expansion of Communism in Southern Europe. She departed Gibraltar 2 March, 1948; and arrived Norfolk 11 March. After overhaul at Norfolk Navy Yard, training cruises off the Eastern seaboard and the Caribbean; she departed Norfolk 4 January 1949, arriving at Gibraltar 13 January. Her 6th Fleet tour ended 21 February, and the carrier arrived Norfolk 5 March. Training exercises occupied the spring and summer; MIDWAY left Norfolk 31 October 1949 as flagship for COMCARDIV 4 for Arctic training exercises, returning to Norfolk 22 November.

Her third tour with 6th Fleet ran from 16 January to 15 May 1950, returning to her homeport 23 May. On 10 July, CVB-41 again sailed east from Norfolk, arriving Gibraltar 20 July; and served with the 6th Fleet until 1 November.

Arriving Norfolk 10 November, the carrier entered the Navy Yard 22 November for installation of new rapid fire anti-aircraft guns and heavier flight decks capable of handling newer jets. Alterations completed 24 April 1951, MIDWAY operated off the Atlantic Coast and in the Caribbean until the end of the year.

MIDWAY departed Norfolk 9 January 1952 for her fifth cruise in the Mediterranean, arriving Gibraltar 21 January. During her stay in the Mediterranean, the carrier engaged in "Operation Grand Slam" along with normal 6th Fleet operations. She departed Gibraltar 28 April and returned to Norfolk 5 May. That summer she made two cruises to Halifax, Nova Scotia, returning to Norfolk 1 August.

26 August, the carrier departed Norfolk for NATO maneuvers in the North Sea. She arrived at Fifth of Clyde, Scotland 10 September, and participated in "Operation Main Brace" until 24 September. The carrier departed Cherbourg, France 29 September, arriving Norfolk 8 October. While enroute, she was redesignated as attack aircraft carrier CVA-41 on 1 October.

Following two more Mediterranean deployments: 1 December 1952 - 19 May 1953 and 4 January - 4 August 1954, MIDWAY departed Norfolk 27 December 1954 for a world cruise. She arrived Taiwan 6 February via the Cape of Good Hope. The carrier became flagship of Commander Carrier Division 3 and served in West Pac with Task Force 77 until 28 June 1955, when she departed Yokosuka for the United States. Arriving Naval Air Station, Alameda 14 July, she proceeded to Seattle, Washington; and entered the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard 8 August 1955.

MIDWAY was placed out of commission at Puget Sound Shipyard 15 October for conversion, which included installation of an angled flight deck. Recommissioned 30 September 1957, she departed Seattle 10 December for shakedown cruises off the California coast. CVA-41 returned to Puget Sound 29 March 1958 for further alterations until 19 May, when she resumed training operations off the West Coast.

She departed Alameda 16 August 1958 for duty with the 7th Fleet, arriving Okinawa 6 September. Serving as flagship for Carrier Division 5, the ship served with Task Force 77 until 24 February 1959. MIDWAY returned to Alameda from Yokosuka 12 March 1959, and entered the San Francisco Navy Shipyard at Hunters Point 14 March.

Following a short overhaul in the shipyard for minor repairs, MIDWAY conducted training exercises off the West Coast until deploying from Alameda 15 August. Upon joining other units of the 7th Fleet at Subic Bay 14 September, 1959 after training exercises in transit and off Hawaii; MIDWAY served with Task Force 77 in normal operations and SEATO exercises. The carrier departed Yokosuka 10 March 1960, arriving Alameda 25 March.

While based at NAS Alameda, MIDWAY underwent shock tests from April 26-29th off the Pacific Coast. The ship arrived San Francisco Naval Shipyard 29 April, where she remained until 6 September. The period 6 September 1960 - 15 February 1961 was occupied in training exercises in the Eastern Pacific. MIDWAY departed Alameda 15 February for service with 7th Fleet, arriving Subic Bay 7 March. As a unit of Task Force 77, she served in the South China Sea during the Laotian Crisis during the Spring of 1961. The carrier departed Subic Bay 12 September for the States. After arriving NAS Alameda 28 September, MIDWAY commenced training exercises in East Pac after a short overhaul period at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

6 April 1962, she departed Alameda for her fourth West Pac cruise, arriving Yokosuka 1 May to become flagship of COMCARDIV 3. MIDWAY's aircraft were used in exercising the Air Defense Systems on Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Philippines, and Taiwan. 25 August, MIDWAY stood off Miyako Jima Island to assist victims of a volcanic eruption. There were no casualties, and the carrier resumed normal operations when relieved by Japanese Coast Guard vessels.

CVA-41 departed Yokosuka 9 October, arriving NAS Alameda 20 October. The carrier entered San Francisco Naval Shipyard December 1962 for major overhaul, and remained in the Yard until 9 April 1963. MIDWAY was involved in training exercises until 8 November when she again departed Alameda for West Pac. Joining the 7th Fleet at Subic 13 December, the carrier remained in the Western Pacific until 11 May 1964; when she sailed from Subic Bay for the United States. Arriving Alameda 26 May, CVA-41 was in San Francisco Naval Shipyard from 3-29 June for replacement of Number 3 elevator which had been carried away in heavy seas during the preceding cruise. From 30 June - 29 October, the CVA was involved in training exercises in the Eastern and Mid-Pacific. She returned to San Francisco Navy Yard 13 November 1964 - 22 January 1965 for repairs and overhaul prior to another West Pac deployment.

The carrier left Alameda 6 March, arriving Subic Bay 4 April via Hawaii to become part of the 7th Fleet. The ship's aircraft saw combat for the first time in strikes against military and logistics installations in North and South Vietnam, while the carrier was on station in the Tonkin Gulf and South China Sea. In June, pilots of Attack Carrier Wing 2 embarked on MIDWAY shot down the first three MIG's credited to U.S. Forces in South East Asia. Two of the Russian made fighters were shot down by the carrier's jets, the third was shot down by a propeller-driven Skyraider.

21 July, the carrier provided assistance to FRANK KNOX who had run aground on Pratas Reef, South China Sea on 18 July. A party was sent from the carrier to assist in salvage operations. Helicopters from MIDWAY transported 155 crewmen from the destroyer to the carrier. IWO JIMA and MARS assisted in salvage operations.

The carrier departed Subic Bay 4 November 1965, arriving NAS Alameda 23 November. She entered the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard 11 February 1966 and was placed out of commission 15 February. MIDWAY is in the process of an extensive modernization program and is due to recommission in November 1969.

MIDWAY has earned the following battle stars and other awards:

NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION:

16 April - 4 November 1965

AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL

WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL

NAVY OCCUPATION SERVICE MEDAL:

Europe: 13 November 1947 - 4 March 1948
11 January - 22 February 1949
16 January - 15 May 1950
20 July - 1 November 1950
21 January - 27 April 1952
10 December 1952 - 8 May 1953
14 January - 26 July 1954

CHINA SERVICE MEDAL (extended):

6 - 13 February 1955

NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL (two awards)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL:

Vietnam: 24 - 25 March 1961
28 March - 7 April 1961
8 April - 11 May 1965
19 May - 28 June 1965
Taiwan : 6 - 10 September 1958
12 - 29 September 1958
12 - 30 October 1958
11 - 15 November 1958
30 November - 12 December 1958

VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL:

22 Jul - 26 Aug 1965
 11 Sep - 9 Oct 1965
 18 Oct - 5 Nov 1965

LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS - CVA-41

Captain J.F. Bolger, USN	10 Sep 1945 - 12 Jan 1946
Captain Herbert S. Duckworth, USN:	12 Jan 1946 - 18 Jul 1946
Captain John P. Whitney, USN:	18 Jul 1946 - 11 Aug 1947
Captain Albert K. Morehouse, USN:	11 Aug 1947 - 22 Apr 1948
Commander Forsyth Massey, USN:	22 Apr 1948 - 28 May 1948
Commander R.N. Sharp, USN:	28 May 1948 - 7 Sep 1948
Captain Marcel E.A. Gouin, USN:	7 Sep 1948 - 8 Aug 1949
Captain Wallace M. Beakley, USN:	8 Aug 1949 - 1 Jul 1950
Captain F.N. Kivette, USN:	1 Jul 1950 - 8 Mar 1951
Captain Kenneth Craig, USN:	8 Mar 1951 - 2 Apr 1952
Captain Frank O'Beirne, USN:	2 Apr 1952 - 4 Apr 1953
Captain Clifford S. Cooper, USN:	4 Apr 1953 - 19 Jan 1954
Captain W.H. Ashford, Jr., USN:	19 Jan 1954 - 1 Oct 1954
Captain Reynold D. Hogle, USN:	1 Oct 1954 - 7 Sep 1955
Commander R.S. Rogers, USN:	7 Sep 1955 - 14 Oct 1955
Captain F.E. Nuessle, USN:	30 Sep 1957 - 2 Jun 1958
Captain John T. Blackburn, USN:	2 Jun 1958 - 29 May 1959
Captain H. Mini, USN:	29 May 1959 - 15 Jun 1960
Captain Ralph W. Cousins, USN:	15 Jun 1960 - 22 Apr 1961
Captain Robert G. Dose, USN:	22 Apr 1961 - 21 Apr 1962
Captain Roy M. Isaman, USN:	21 Apr 1962 - 25 Jan 1963
Captain Leroy E. Harris, USN:	25 Jan 1963 - 25 Jan 1964
Captain Whitney Wright, USN:	25 Jan 1964 - 19 Dec 1964
Captain James M. O'Brien, USN:	19 Dec 1964 - 15 Feb 1966

PREPARED:
 TYPED:

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 7/19/68